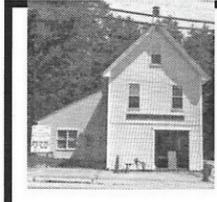




Arlene Cole presenting the Newcastle Historical Society Scholarship to Riley Cushing at Lincoln Academy, June 2017.



# NEWCASTLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Summer 2017

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## The Steamer *Newcastle* by Arlene Cole

The 83 ton steamer *Newcastle* was built in 1902 at the A. & M. Gamage Company in South Bristol. A. for Albio and M for Menzus Gamage were brothers, sons of Thomas and Waty Thompson Gamage. Christine Huston Dodge writes that the brothers built 77 vessels and rebuilt as many more beginning with the *Fairy Queen* in 1855 and ending with the *Newcastle* in 1902.

Much of my information on the steamer *Newcastle* came from The "Launching of the Steamer *Newcastle*" by Harold Castner and filed with his writings at Skidompha Library. His story begins when a liniment called "Johnson's Anodyne Liniment" was put on the market.

Interested parties formed a company before 1900 and named it "The Damariscotta Steamboat Company." Stock was issues at \$25.00 a share. Some members of the company got the idea of sending a small steamboat along the coast to sell the *Anodyne* liniment. They had A. & M. Gamage build a little steamer in 1894 and named it the *Anodyne*. Business was

good and in 1901 the steamer *Bristol* was completed. The *Anodyne* ran on John's Bay and the *Bristol* on Damariscotta River.

Dividends ran high and the two steamers were found to be insufficient so at a Director's meeting in 1902 they decided to build an even larger steamer. An order was placed with A. & M. Gamage for the *Newcastle* to be queen of the fleet. It was to be 80 feet long.

At this time Harold Castner was a "boy". He does not say how old he was but he had worked doing odd jobs and had accumulated \$25.00 which then was quite a sum of money. It was invested in stock of the steamboat company. When the time came to decide who would launch and christen the steamer the owners decided to choose the youngest stockholder for the occasion. Harold Castner, with his \$25.00 in stock, turned out to be the youngest stockholder.

While all this was being decided it was found that many devout women stockholders

continued on Page 2

### Inside this issue:

<i>The Steamer Newcastle</i>	1
<i>Stone Tools from the Damariscotta River</i>	3
<i>Photographic Exhibit</i>	5
<i>Book Review</i>	6
<i>NHS Book Store</i>	7

### MEETINGS

1st Wednesday  
of Each Month  
7:00 P.M.

### Newcastle Town office

Visitors Welcome

No Meetings in January,  
February & March

### Officers of NHS:

Interim President:  
Tim Dinsmore  
Vice-President:  
Carrie Watson  
Secretary:  
Karen Paz  
Treasurer:  
Edmee Dejean

Genealogy  
Information and Research  
Available

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### The Steamer *Newcastle*

continued from Page 1

objected to using intoxicating liquor in the christening bottle. An agreeable solution was found, the Directors appointed this group of women as "Sponsor Committee." The women accepted the task and determined the *Newcastle* would be christened with pure water. They were able to lower a glass bottle onto the bottom of Little Pond and collect the purest of water.

On launching day all gathered at the shipyard. It was practically a holiday with folks from Newcastle, Damariscotta and Bristol as well as South Bristol there to see the big event. According to Castner he was hurried to the Jack Staff, in the fore peak where he was practically surrounded by the women's committee. They had prepared a little speech for him, "I christen thee good ship *Newcastle* and may good luck go with thee forever!"

As preparations were made to remove the jack screw the ship gave a tremor. The "committee" became quite excited and closed in behind him. Castner writes, "After 60 years I can still remember a momentary impulse to christen them instead of the ship. However, I was able to restrain myself and waving the bottle in a wide arc, crashed it down on the top of the stern,

as I recited my speech and the ship started immediately to a fast and successful launching."

Thus, the *Newcastle* was launched. Captain Elliott Gamage, Menzus' son was Captain of the *Newcastle*. He ran it all along the Maine coast. When available it was also used for small excursions and private parties in the area.

In 1903 the Company leased the *Newcastle* to the U.S. government for service to the forts in Portland Harbor. Returning in the fall, the *Newcastle* continued to run on the Damariscotta River and had a United States Mail Contract. It made two trips daily and there were many students in South Bristol who were able to attend Lincoln Academy by riding the steamer.

The *Newcastle* again was leased to the United States Government in 1908. By 1915, with the increase in automobiles, business began to fall off. The *Newcastle* was sold to parties in New York. There she was used in connection with the steamer *King Philip* for fishing parties out of New York. Castner does not say how long she was in New York or how she met her end. The Damariscotta Steamboat Company gave up its charter in 1917.

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**JOIN TODAY**

Membership in the Newcastle Historical Society is open to all who want to help preserve the history of the town of Newcastle. To renew, upgrade or begin your membership, please mail this form and your check payable to the "Newcastle Historical Society" at P. O. Box 482, Newcastle, ME 04553.

**MEMBERSHIP FORM**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

YEAR ROUND \_\_\_\_\_ or SEASONAL \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE NUMBER ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

SEASONAL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

SEASONAL CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ SEASONAL EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_



Your privacy is important to us. We do not share your email and personal information with other groups.

**DUES:** Student \$10 Individual \$15 Family \$25 Lifetime \$150

**The Newcastle Historical Society Book Store**

**Between Two Rivers**

by Arlene Cole  
A softcover history of Newcastle with maps and photographs  
Cost: \$20.00

**Cemeteries of Newcastle**

by Geraldine Hanley & Nancy Hartley  
A softcover book of burials in Newcastle from 1758-2004.  
Cost: \$20.00

**Damariscotta Lake Book**

by Edmee Dejean, Julia McLeod, Mary Sheldon & Marilyn Speckman  
A softcover pictorial and written history of Damariscotta Lake people, culture and traditions.  
Cost: \$23.00

**History Tales of Newcastle**

by Arlene Cole  
A softcover book containing 130 articles on aspects of Newcastle's history.  
Cost: \$21.00

**1816 Map of Newcastle**

Laminated: \$20.00  
Not laminated: \$15.00

**1878 Drawing Map of Newcastle and Damariscotta**

Cost: \$5.00

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**To order** send check or money order and mailing instructions to: Newcastle Historical Society P.O. Box 482, Newcastle, Maine 04553

Please add \$5.50 for shipping and handling charges.

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Book Review  
*The Amanda Letters*  
 by Courtney MacLachlan

*The Amanda Letters* by Courtney MacLachlan is a work of nonfiction based on 46 letters written between the years 1861-1866. The letters were found in a barn in Friendship, Maine owned by Dr. William Hahn and his wife Florence. Most of the letters were written to Amanda Davis who was between 14 and 18 years old during the time she received them. Amanda's two cousins from Warren, Maine wrote many of the letters. But other letters were written by neighbors, friends, brothers or cousins who were away at sea or fighting with the Union forces in the Civil War. Amanda saved all these letters over a 5 year period, and they were found almost a century later by Courtney MacLachlan when the Hahns left the house and some of its contents to her father .

The letters have been transcribed just as they were written, but MacLachlan has added paragraphs, and historical information that provides context for events mentioned in the letters. Overall, the letters provide a picture of life in mid-coast Maine in the 1860s. The long hours of work, the prevalence of diseases, descriptions of home entertainments, and the challenges the weather presented are all topics for discussions in the Amanda letters.

It is an easy read that presents an unvarnished view of the lives of average people in a small village on coastal Maine during the stressful years of the Civil War.

Courtney MacLachlan graduated from Wellesley College and received a master's degree in Library Science from URI. She was a school library media specialist, and has served as librarian at Strawberry Banke Museum in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

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Stone Tools from the Damariscotta River  
 by Bruce Campbell

Stone tools collected by the late Leon Grover along the Damariscotta River in Newcastle over 30 years ago have been graciously donated to the Newcastle Historical Society (NHS). In order to gain more information about their origin and function, the NHS requested they be examined by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission in Augusta. The following is a brief summary of the findings of Dr. Arthur Spiess, Senior Archaeologist for the Commission, terms of the age, composition, and function of the stone tools.

There are over 100 stone tools in the collection. They span the period of the Susquehanna tradition of the Late Archaic period through the subsequent Ceramic period. The Susquehanna tradition (4000 to 3000 years before the present (BP\*)) is characterized by the general warming trend of the entire Archaic period (10,000 to 3000 years BP). At that time along the Maine coast, sea level was rising and inshore cold-water fisheries for seals, flounder and cod developed. Native Americans had seasonal villages along the shorelines in the coastal spruce forests. They constructed dug-out canoes with

stone gouges. Boiled cooking was done in wood or bark containers heated by inserting heated stones from the campfires.

After the Susquehanna tradition came the Ceramic period (3000 to 500 years BP). This period saw the development of birch-bark canoes, clay pottery and bows and arrows. Birch canoes were more portable than the heavy dugouts, and enabled more dispersed settlement along the seashore, rivers and lakes. Axes and gouges of the previous Archaic period became rare. Clay pottery became common about 2800 years BP, and facilitated boiled cooking and food storage. Bows and arrows (with stone points) replaced the previously used stone-tipped spears and throwing sticks about 2000 years BP. Growing beans and corn along the coast as far north as Pemaquid supplemented hunting and gathering from about 800 years BP.

Donated stone items include projectile points, arrow heads, knives, axes, scrapers, choppers, partially worked pieces, flakes produced in the tool-making process and hammer stones used in the manufacture of stone tools.

The identification of the rocks and minerals from which the artifacts were made provide information about the trading range of the native peoples. The rocks and minerals from which the tools were made are generally cherts, quartz and rhyolite. Some can be identified as having an origin in Maine such as the Kineo rhyolite, banded-striped rhyolite from Vinalhaven and the Munsungun chert from north of Baxter state park. Others have been traded from more distant locations, such as Pennsylvania jasper from the Delaware River area and Ramah chert from Labrador. For example, *Figure 1* is a 5½ inch long (spear) point from the Susquehanna tradition made of a locally available volcanic rock. *Figure 2* is a 7 inch long pecked stone axe damaged by being hit by a plow. An axe this large is probably of Late Archaic age.

The information gleaned from the artifacts supports the belief that the Damariscotta River was an active site for trading, living, hunting,

continued on Page 4

*Stone Tools from the Damariscotta River*

continued from Page 3

fishing thousands of years ago. The NHS will continue to update you on our archaeological research developments.

We are indebted to the Grover family for donating the artifacts, and to Senior Archaeologist Dr. Arthur Spiess of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission for evaluating them. While the preservation of this collection is a positive event, it should be noted that arbitrary removal of artifacts such as these without careful archaeological study of their in-situ relationship to each other and the characteristics of the site results in the loss of the most significant information about past native life along the Damariscotta River.



\*BP (Before Present) means before 1950 AD. BP is the most commonly used convention in radiocarbon dating, referring to 1950, the date that the radiocarbon calibration curves were established.



Figure 1. A 5 ½ inch long spear point from the Susquehanna Tradition.



Figure 2. A 7 inch long pecked stone axe of Late Archaic age.

Historic Photographs Exhibit Continues



The exhibit ***People, Place and the Everyday-Historic Photographs of Early to Mid-century Mid-coast Maine***, continues through September 7, 2017 at 77 Main Street, Newcastle. The show features photographs selected for display from the Dinsmore-Flye collection, a collection that comprises tens of thousands of negatives originating from the photograph studios of Lindsay, Bailey, Healey, and Ivan Flye. Newcastle Historical Society volunteers have scanned over 4,500 negatives of the images since the collection was placed in the care of the society. It is from this first batch that the 40 photographs have been printed, mounted and matted for display.

The photographs are a visual link to Newcastle's past; in some cases showing structures that are no longer in existence, and occupations that have been labeled outmoded. But the pictures also remind us that although the fashions and build-

ings have changed, the ties of friendship, family, and affiliations remain important no matter the year. Since some of the subjects in the photos have not been identified, viewers are encouraged to leave notes about a photograph, or talk with a docent on duty if they have information about the picture.

This exhibit is also a reminder of the importance of keeping these negatives available for viewing, safe and undamaged as they age. Storage continues to be a critical issue for maintaining the negatives. Volunteer time as well as financial support is needed to safeguard this important and irreplaceable collection.

Interim President of the Newcastle Historical Society Tim Dinsmore recognizes with great appreciation the people and organizations who made this exhibit possible: Ralph Doring, John H. Longmaid, Leah W. Sprague, The First National Bank of Damariscotta, Han-

ford Markets, and Yellowfront Grocery. Tim also recognizes with a heartfelt thank you the society members who made this exhibit possible: Arlene Cole and Nancy Hartley who reviewed and identified hundreds of negatives and photos; Scotte Brooke and Edmae Dejean for the many years spent scanning negatives and setting up a data base; Christopher Rice and Karen Paz who transformed the idea of an exhibit into reality, and the members who volunteered their time to docent the show.

Please drop by the exhibit before it closes. Photographs are also on sale through a silent auction. Exhibit hours are from Noon to 7 p.m. on Thursdays and Fridays; Noon to 5 p.m. on Saturdays; and 10 A.M. to 2:00 p.m. Sundays until September 7th. Location is 77 Main Street, Newcastle - just across the bridge from Damariscotta.

